Disability Module Interviewer Instructions

DISABILITIES (Qs. 26 – 35)

Columns 26 through 35: DISABILITIES

Disability is an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Disability is impossible to describe in one or two sentences, partly because it covers a huge range of things and also touches a large number of people. It is likely to affect everyone at some stage in their lives. Generally, a disability is inability or great difficulty in performing one or more major life activities in the person's current social environment, either because of a physical, mental, or psychological illness, or an impairment with any part of the body, such as a missing, or damaged part of the body.

Major life activities include the following:

- Having a full range of movement while standing, lifting, walking and so forth,
- Having intact senses (vision, hearing, touch, smell, taste, balance),
- Communicating with others (speaking and writing),
- Learning and working,
- Caring for oneself in hygiene and homemaking,
- Using mental processes such as thinking, concentrating, and problem solving,
- Interacting with others and developing and maintaining relationships.

Questions 26 through 35 are asked for each household member and visitor who spent the night before the survey (column 5 and/or column 6 = YES) and who are age 5 and older. The questions ask about *difficulty* with vision, hearing, communicating/understanding, memory or concentration, walking, and the capacity to undertake basic activities such as washing or dressing. If a person is experiencing difficulty in any of the areas, information is sought about the degree of difficulty that he/she has.

Having *difficulty* with an activity means:

- Being unable to perform the function
- Increased effort to perform the function
- Discomfort or pain when performing the function
- Slowness in performing the function

The answer categories are set up so that the respondent can indicate the level of difficulty.

1. NO DIFFICULTY
2. SOME DIFFICULTY
3. A LOT OF DIFFICULTY
4. CANNOT DO AT ALL
8. DON'T KNOW

Each question starts with an introduction asking about specific functions.

Columns 26 - 28: SEEING

People with difficulty seeing may be born with this difficulty or acquire one later in life. It is important to note that most people who are registered blind may retain partial sight; only a very small percentage are totally blind. People who have difficulty seeing may have different degrees of sight and their difficulty may differ. Some people may have blurred vision, or may not be able to judge distances and speed, or to distinguish between objects that have a similar color or shape. Others who have difficulty seeing may only see things that are very close, or have a restricted range of vision, such as tunnel vision and no peripheral vision.

The purpose of this question is to identify persons who have vision difficulties or problems of any kind even when wearing glasses or contact lenses (if they wear glasses/contacts). They can have a problem seeing things close up or far away. They may not be able to see out of one eye or they may be only able to see directly in front of them, but not to the sides. Any difficulty with vision that they consider a problem should be captured.

Seeing refers to an individual's capacity to perceive or observe what is happening around them.

If a respondent is hesitant about the degree of difficulty a household member/visitor experiences, ask them for their best judgment.

Columns 29 - 31: HEARING

The purpose of these questions is to identify persons who have some hearing limitation or problems of any kind with their hearing even when using a hearing aid (if they wear a hearing aid). They can have a problem hearing only when they are in a noisy environment, or they may have problems distinguishing sounds from different sources. They may not be able to hear in one ear or both. Any difficulty with hearing that they consider a problem should be captured.

Hearing refers to an individual's capacity to know what is being said to them or the sounds of activity, including danger, that is happening around them.

Column 32: COMMUNICATING: UNDERSTANDING AND BEING UNDERSTOOD

Some people with speech and language disabilities may have difficulties in articulating sounds or understanding and formulating thoughts in spoken words. These difficulties may be immediately perceptible, or they may not emerge until discussion focuses on more abstract matters. Difficulties in speech and language may be associated with particular conditions, e.g. when the facial muscles are affected, as in stroke and cerebral palsy.

The purpose of this item is to identify persons who have some problems with talking, listening or understanding speech. They can have a problem making themselves understood, or the problem may be that they can't understand people who talk to them or try to communicate with them in other ways.

Sometimes they can be understood by members of the household who are familiar with them, but have difficulty to be understood outside the household.

Communicating refers to a person exchanging information or ideas with other people through the use of language. They may use their voices for their exchange or make signs or write the information they want to exchange. Communication can be interrupted at numerous places in the exchange process. It may involve mechanical problems such as hearing impairment or speech impairment, or it may be related to the ability of the mind to interpret the sounds that the auditory system is gathering and to recognize the words that are being used.

Column 33: REMEMBERING AND CONCENTRATING

The purpose of this question is to identify household members or visitors age 5 and older who have some problems with remembering or concentrating. They can have a problem finding their way around, or the problem can be that they can't concentrate on what they are doing, or they may forget where they are or what month it is. They may not remember what someone just said to them or they may seem confused or frightened about most things. Any difficulty with remembering, concentrating or understanding what is going on around them should be captured. We do not intend to capture difficulties remembering or concentrating because of common everyday situations such as high workload or stress, or as a result of substance abuse.

Remembering refers to an individual using his/her memory capacity in order to recall what has happened around them. It means the individual can bring to mind or think again about something that has taken place in the past (either the recent past or further back). In connection with younger people, remembering is often associated with storing facts learned in school and being able to retrieve them when needed.

Concentrating refers to an individual using his mental ability to accomplish some task such as reading, calculating numbers, learning something. It is associated with focusing on the task at hand in order to complete the task. It is the act of directing ones full attention to one subject or to focus without distraction on one thing.

Column 34: WALKING, CLIMBING STEPS

The causes of difficulties walking or climbing steps might have started at birth or might be acquired later in life. The causes can vary widely, and can affect the person's bones, muscles, joints, nerves, tendons, spinal cord, sensory organs, and/or the brain. The condition leading to the difficulty can be stable or degenerative (as in the case of multiple sclerosis) and may render individuals unable to perform the same range of physical activities that those without these difficulties do and, consequently, they may face barriers of access.

The purpose of this question is to identify persons who have some limitation or problems of any kind getting around on foot. It may or may not contribute to difficulty in doing their daily activities. They can have a problem walking more than a block, or short or long distances, or the problem can be that they can't walk up or down steps without difficulty. They may not be able to walk any distance without stopping to rest or they may not be able to walk without using

some type of device such as a cane, a walker, or crutches. In some instances, they may be totally unable to stand for more than a minute or two and need a wheelchair to get from place to place.

In addition to problems with the musculoskeletal system, difficulties walking can include those resulting from impairments in balance, vision, endurance, or other systems. Any difficulty with walking (whether it is on flat land or up or down steps) should be captured.

Walking refers to an individual using his/her legs in such a way as to propel themselves over the ground to get from point A to point B. The capacity to walk should be without assistance of any device or human. If such assistance is needed, the person has difficulty walking.

Column 35: WASHING and DRESSING

The purpose of this question is to identify persons who have difficulty with taking care of themselves independently. Washing and dressing represent tasks that occur on a daily basis and are basic activities. Note if the person is using an assistive device or has a person to help them with this function, it is highly likely they have difficulty with self-care.

Washing all over refers to the process of cleaning one's entire body (usually with soap and water) in the usual manner for the culture. The washing activity includes cleaning hair and feet, as well as gathering any age and culturally appropriate items necessary for bathing such as soap or shampoo, a wash cloth, or water.

Dressing refers to all aspects of putting clothing or garments on the upper and lower body including the feet if culturally appropriate. Gathering clothing from storage areas (i.e. closet, dressers), securing buttons, tying knots, opening and closing zippers, etc., are example of aspects of dressing that could be considered by the respondent. The aspects of dressing should be age and culturally appropriate.

End of DB instructions.